



Ajit Pai
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission
4455 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

RE: The Matter of Restoring Internet Freedom

Docket No. 17-108

The Texas Library Association's (TLA) almost 7,000 members join the American Association of Law Libraries, the American Library Association, and the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies in support of the 2015 Open Internet Order which ensures commercial ISPs' network management practices and commercial terms are transparent.

Texas libraries offer open access to information resources and services to all. No matter what type, academic, EC-12 school, public, or special, libraries rely on a freely open internet to carry out their missions and serve their communities.

Vacating or substantially altering the 2015 Open Internet Order would give ISPs the financial incentive and opportunity to block, degrade, or prioritize access to internet-based applications, services, and content. Such actions would have a significant, negative impact on online education, research, learning and free speech. The educational and public interest benefits of an open internet are essential to our country's economic and democratic future.

Texas libraries rely on high capacity broadband infrastructure and an open internet to provide access to digital collections, e-government services, distance learning, telemedicine, job training, professional development, and more to millions of students, entrepreneurs, executives, job seekers and members of the public. Libraries are a vital link to online information without which Texans cannot be competitive in education, workforce, and economic development.

Our libraries invest significant resources in costly internet services and most want to expand their broadband services to offer enhanced access to their communities. Allowing ISPs to create internet 'fast lanes' will only push this essential infrastructure cost higher, making obtaining these services more complex, expensive and challenging for publically funded organizations.

Paid prioritization favors those with the resources to pay more for faster service, and disadvantages those organizations without similarly deep pockets, such as libraries. This would create a system of 'haves' and 'have nots' that is antithetical to the mission of libraries to provide equitable access to information in a rapidly changing environment.

Broadband is a critical infrastructure priority, and the need for clear and consistent rules governing fixed and mobile broadband access is increasing, not decreasing. Libraries depend on the open internet to provide access to essential information and resources to millions of people. Additionally, they bring the benefits of the internet to segments of the population that are not served by the commercial sector.

The current Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) would dismantle established open internet rules and allow commercial ISPs to block, degrade or prioritize access to internet services and content. Such action would seriously impede libraries' ability to offer open and equitable access to essential information and resources to millions of people. The free flow of ideas and information, and the public's ability to access those ideas and information, is essential to economic and personal growth.

Therefore, the Texas Library Association opposes the NPRM which would codify a system that allows commercial ISPs to determine what content is most valuable and reward those that can afford to pay more for access. We respectfully request that the FCC maintain the 2015 Open Internet Order to ensure that all individuals have access to online resources that are essential to education, economic and personal development, research, and free speech.

Sincerely,



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TLA President



Patricia H. Smith
Executive Director